

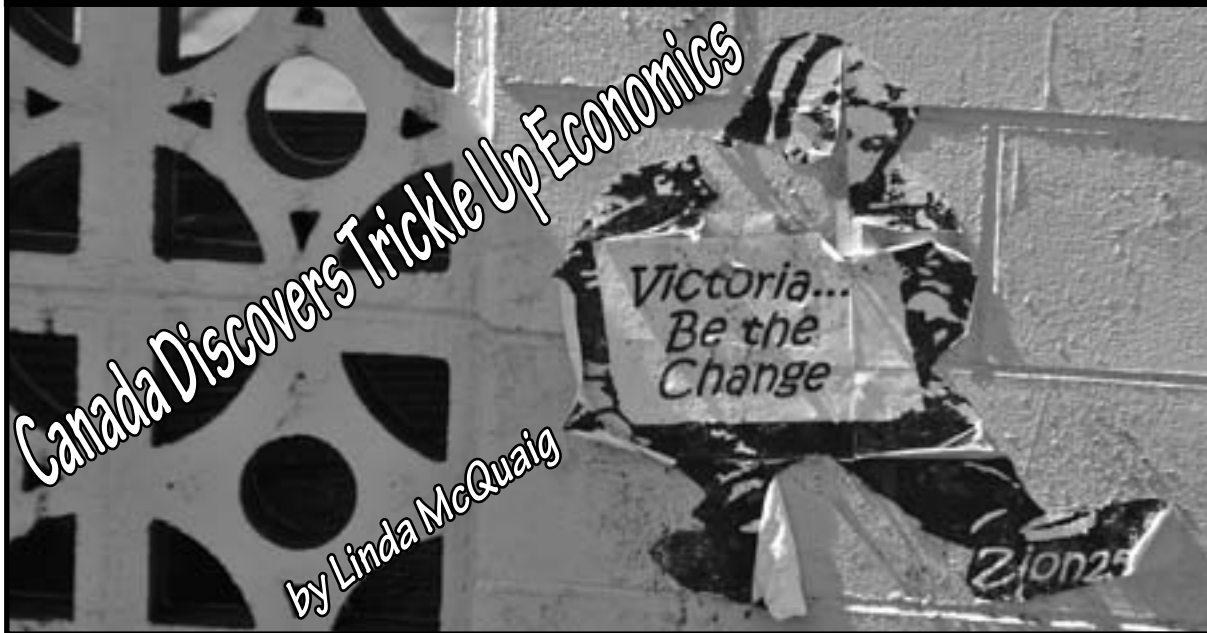
Victoria Street Newz June 2011

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There was always skepticism about claims that, as the rich became richer, income would “trickle down” to others. What wasn’t perhaps foreseen was that the trickling would actually be in the other direction, and that it would be more of a torrent than a trickle.

But the evidence is now clear. Over the last three decades, the tables of the rich have overflowed, with barely any scraps falling off. On the contrary, there’s been a massive transfer of income and wealth from Canada’s middle and lower class to the rich.

The result is that Canada has become a highly unequal society.

This is bad news, since a growing body of empirical evidence shows that extreme inequality has a clearly negative effect on a wide range of health, social and economic problems, as well as undermining democracy.

While some degree of inequality is inevitable and even desirable (allowing bigger rewards for those making bigger contributions), the level of inequality that exists today in the Anglo-American countries - the United States, Britain and Canada - is extreme, and almost unique in the advanced world.

This is a dramatic departure from the far greater equality that prevailed in the U.S. and Canada in the early postwar years - from 1945 to about 1980 - when the benefits of economic growth were more widely shared.

In the 1950s and 1960s, for instance, the real median family income in Canada was growing fast enough to double every 20 years. Since 1980, it has barely grown at all.

Middle class families have only managed to maintain their standard of living by working much harder than their parents, typically relying today on two incomes instead of one. Meanwhile, at the top, things have been hopping. Indeed, virtually all the income growth in the last 30 years has gone to the top

As a recent study by economist Armine Yalnizyan of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives documents, the top-earning 1 per cent of Canadians almost doubled their share of national income, from 7.7 per cent to 13.8 per cent, over the past three decades.

And the higher up the food chain, the bigger the gains. The richest 0.01 per cent - those now earning on average \$3.8 million a year - more than quintupled their share of national income

All this can be captured vividly by imagining a “national income parade,” a concept developed by Dutch statistician Jan Penn to measure income inequality.

Everyone in the country marches in the parade, with heights determined by incomes, starting with the shortest (poorest) citizens and ending with the tallest

continued on page three

About Street Newz

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Victoria Street Newz welcomes written submissions including personal stories, interviews, event reviews, cartoons, poetry, photographs, or artwork, but we can't guarantee everything will be published. We reserve the right to edit, and will not print anything libelous, racist, sexist, or homophobic. Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, must include phone number or email (if possible, for confirmation) and may be edited for length. You can publish using a pseudonym, or anonymously.

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You can contribute to social change by supporting the *Victoria Street Newz* team, by pondering the root causes of poverty, and by working for peaceful, non-violent change.

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Newz vendor Debbie Norton, and finalizing this edition for the printer, so I wasn't able to attend as much as I would have liked.

I did get to the opening event, Friday night at St. John the Divine church hall, and I'm glad for that. When I arrived, near the end of the free dinner, the place was packed. There were so many bicycles I had to park mine across the street. I'm guessing over a hundred mouths were fed, people of all ages from a tiny infant to elder seniors with all ages in between, people who have lived or are living homeless or in poverty, human rights advocates, supporters, musicians, artists, poets, friends.

It was a night of feasting, solidarity building, poetry, and music. Representatives from the Power of Women group, who organize the February 14th annual walk for missing women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and facilitated the Olympic Tent Village (among their many projects), told stories of their lives and activism. One reminded us of the plight of Indigenous babies who have been taken from their parents, who continue to be taken, and of other violence poor women experience from the "authorities," including police abuse. Another shared her experience of the Gastown Riot of 1971. We learned that the DTES has, for many years, been intentionally neglected, dismissed as just a place where poor people live. As the population increases, and the city looks for space, this attitude is giving way to unrelenting gentrification, most offensive are plans for more condo towers. People who've lived in the DTES all their lives are being pushed out. Where are low-income, disabled, or otherwise marginalized people to go?

Vancouver's Harsha Walia, and Victoria based Tamara Herman (one of the workshop organizers), spoke about the political nature

just another rant

janinebandcroft.blogspot.com

of our work, and the spoken word poets who followed the panel presentation creatively reinforced this need to realize the root causes that make our struggle necessary in the first place. We confront a powerfully entrenched colonialist and capitalist socio-economic ideological model that has a history of theft, murder, and genocide, was never intended to be egalitarian or democratic, and imposes itself with fierce tenacity, often through the barrel of a gun, onto its unsuspecting victims. As the great divide between rich and poor continues to increase, we are witnessing and living the repercussions like never before. And, if Friday night's turnout is any indication, we are building allies like never before too.

For more information, join the DTES Power of Women Facebook group, or check out the new documentary *Survival, Strength, Sisterhood: Power of Women in the Downtown Eastside*, which documents the 20 year history of the annual women's memorial march for missing and murdered women in Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories. It's available free online: vimeo.com/19877895.

I'd like to thank Ken, from the James Bay United Church, for organizing Debbie's memorial service. I met her friends from the thrift store where she volunteered, from the choir she sang in, and from the artistic community who supported her creativity. Debbie was one of our first vendors. It was an honour to know her, and to meet some friends and hear stories about her life beyond *Street Newz*. May we all have a chance to, someday at last, rest in peace.

Janine Bandcroft is founder, and current co-ordinator, of the Victoria Street Newz. She hopes that words aren't as offensive to you as the increasing numbers of homeless, elders and children among them.



Letters

write to us at StreetNewz@islandnet.com,
or drop off your writings at 1027 Pandora Avenue.

No Nukes are Good Nukes

There are sci-fi stories based on a nuclear priesthood to alert future generations to the dangers of nuclear-waste storage areas. We've gone beyond that now with the Japan disaster. Several nuclear engineers have been exposed to lethal doses of radiation trying to shut down Fukushima. Some work there had to be done manually and made exposure necessary.

We have to ask how long before there are no people left with the expertise to close a nuclear power plant. The Germans have begun a process of evaluating each of their six plants, choosing the most vulnerable one, and closing it while there is still the expertise and capital available. They could be nuclear free in three years.

We would be wise to do the same, starting with the Chalk River facility just upstream from Ottawa. That 40-year-old plant has been plagued with accidents since it opened. Two occurred since the head of our Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Linda Keen, was fired by the Harper government for refusing to allow the plant to operate without a back-up pump. Apparently our current NRC head is disregarding that regulation.

While we're at it, we should get Statistics Canada to provide an estimate of how many deaths are caused by use of radiation to diagnose cancer.

Jim Erkiletian, Nanaimo



Let's Change with the Times, eh?!!

Mayor McRae, opposition MLA, Fraser, and BC Transport Minister, Lekstrom, are all dreaming in technicolour thinking that Hwy. 4, between Alberni and Ucluelet, can be saved by the taxpayer. Give your heads a shake, gentlemen, that road is doomed by climate change's increased rainfall and snow pack.

Time to kiss entitlements good-bye, fight for your taxes to be spent wisely, for a change. Multitasking our tax dollars to produce spinoffs and triple-bottom-line development is the way forward. I refuse to support sinking millions upon millions into a road that's doomed. Keep it safe, for now, but for heaven's sake let's make a realistic, sustainable plan. Precipitation is increasing and will continue increasing in direct correlation with increasing GHG emissions. Long term, the highway is a write-off, not planning for its certain demise is foolishness.

A twice daily, foot-passenger and truck ferry is needed between the Port of Alberni and Ucluelet with electric vehicles to rent, in Ukee, and electric bus services for travel on the peninsula. This will create a whole different type of eco-tourism and the spinoffs for the region will be unlimited, a much better option than the controversial, coal port.

Two small-footprint terminals incorporating rising sea levels, are needed in Ukee and Alberni.

This will be a worthy challenge for our engineers if keeping the peninsula serviced by the taxpayer, with transport, is something we can do, sustainably.

Other creative solutions include bringing our GHG emissions down, yet meeting the needs of the residents, businesses and visitors. Boats remain the cheapest, least GHG producing form of transport we have at the moment. Our inlet is safe from many winds, and the hazards in Barkley Sound can be navigated.

Who will pay? Considering the BC government can't seem to fund its own judiciary enough to claim justice is not being delayed and that criminal cases are not being thrown out, perhaps it will have to be a public-private transportation partnership? Must we consider the dreaded 3P? Golden opportunities lay ahead for savvy entrepreneurs. Let cool heads prevail, let's start the conversation now. What do you think?

Jen Bradley, Port Alberni

Trickle Up Economics cont'd from cover

(richest). What is striking is how low to the ground almost everyone in the parade is - except for a small number of giants at the end.

If we compare the Canadian income parade of the late 1970s to today's parade, we find very little difference - not much has changed, that is - except at the very end.

In the 1970s parade, the final marcher towers above his fellow citizens, measuring more than 200 feet tall, about one-sixth the height of the CN Tower. In today's parade, however, the head of the final marcher is no longer visible to marchers on the ground; even if they proceed to the CN Tower viewing deck, they're not even up to his knees.

The massive upward flow of income has largely been invisible to the public, even though it may well amount to the most significant change in Canadian society in decades.

The impact on Canada's social fabric is huge and likely to grow. Recent research - particularly the work of British epidemiologists Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett - shows that less equal societies almost always have more violence, more disease, more mental health problems, higher infant mortality rates, reduced life expectancies, as well as less social cohesion. The effects are most pronounced at the bottom, but are evident throughout the society.

Perhaps most striking is the finding that people in less equal societies have reduced social mobility. In fact, there's little upward mobility today in the United States. Those wanting to give their children a chance to actually live the American Dream are better off moving to Sweden.

There's also evidence linking extreme inequality with serious economic problems. The level of inequality reached in 2008 was virtually identical to that of 1929, suggesting that large concentrations of wealth at the top create a dynamic leading to reckless financial speculation and Wall Street crashes - with their devastating consequences of recession and unemployment.

But perhaps the most important impact of concentrated economic power is on democracy. As the great American jurist Louis Brandeis put it: "We can have democracy . . . or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of the few. We cannot have both."

Efforts to limit the political influence of the wealthy - such as the tighter campaign contribution laws brought in by the Chrétien government - are useful, but can't deal with the scope of the problem.

The wealthy exert influence not just through campaign contributions, but at every stage of the political process: in the forming of political parties, the writing of party platforms, the selection of candidates, the drafting and amending of legislation, not to mention the shaping of public opinion through think-tanks and media ownership.

The wealthy also often employ a form of blackmail, either directly or indirectly threatening they'll leave the country if governments don't capitulate to their demands for lower taxes. While it's hard to imagine political leaders caving in to similar threats from other groups - say, electricians or teachers - the sheer economic power of the wealthy seems to quickly bring governments to heel.

Oddly, there's been little probing of why income has gone so heavily to the top in recent years.

It's hard to find any justification for the fact that, while the average CEO was making about 25 times the average worker in the late 1970s,

today's average CEO makes roughly 250 times the average worker.

Certainly there's no evidence that today's CEOs or other top-earning Canadians are any more talented, productive or hard-working than their 1970s counterparts.

The change is often attributed to "globalization," although this fails to explain why it hasn't happened in other advanced nations that also compete successfully in the global economy - like Germany, Japan and the Scandinavian countries.

A more likely explanation is that the rich have used their clout to get governments in the United States, Britain and Canada to change the rules, redirecting economic benefits to themselves.

They convinced governments, for instance, to alter the rules governing executive stock options, making them much more lucrative. (Although only about one-third of Canada's top corporations were using stock options early in the 1990s, they were all were using them by the end of the decade. The value of stock options for Canadian CEOs exceeded their salaries by 300 per cent.)

The rich also managed to use their control of corporate boards to push up executive compensation. Since corporate boards are largely made up of corporate executives, a decision to raise the salary of an individual CEO helps set a higher standard for executive pay generally, benefitting all board members.

"They have a conflict of interest, since they have a stake in high financial salaries," notes Richard Posner, a critic of today's executive compensation (and also, incidentally, the judge who recently turned down Conrad Black's U.S. legal appeal).

The rich also greatly enriched themselves by convincing governments to lower their taxes. Whereas the top marginal tax rate - the rate paid on income above a certain level - averaged 80 per cent in Canada in the early postwar years; it is now just 46 per cent (39 per cent in Alberta).

It was argued that lower taxes would encourage better performances at the top, increasing overall economic growth. But that didn't happen. On the contrary, economic growth rates were higher in the early postwar years - roughly twice as high - as they've been since 1980. This suggests that higher taxes on the rich - like those in the early postwar era - do not discourage economic growth.

In fact, the introduction of an inheritance tax in Canada (like ones that exist in almost all advanced nations) would enable Ottawa to collect enough revenue to create educational trust funds for all Canadian children, thereby significantly improving national productivity.

Yet anyone advocating higher taxes on the rich is quickly denounced by groups like the right-wing Fraser Institute. Mark Milke, a commentator with the institute, dismisses concerns about rising inequality in Canada as merely the product of envy, or what he calls the "green-eyed beast."

As the rich manage to direct more and more of society's resources toward themselves, the appropriate response for the rest of us, apparently, is to celebrate their good fortune.



Linda McQuaig is co-author, with Neil Brooks, of *The Trouble with Billionaires*, published by Viking Canada. This article was originally published in the *Toronto Star*, where Linda's column appears every other Tuesday.

Fan Base

by Brian Mason

"I'm a Derrick Jensen fan." So began an essay I wrote for *Street Newz* in 2008. And those words are, by and large, still accurate, only now in a different way. I've read many of Derrick's books and articles over the years and always admired his candor. He seems to say what many people wish they could say out loud in polite company but are hesitant to do. Typical is premise one at the start of his two-volume opus, *Endgame: The Problem of Civilization*: "Civilization is not and can never be sustainable. This is especially true for industrial civilization."

Jensen, in that work, offers up 20 premises in all, of varying lengths, which, taken together or considered one by one, make for grim, apocalyptic reading. Yet it's hard to disagree with any one of them. Each is a stinging slap in the face, equally a call to arms and a cry of despair. Almost biblical in their sweep and majesty ("Love does not imply pacifism," proclaims premise fifteen), Jensen's premises judge and condemn how you - and every one you know and love - lives their lives. He permits no wiggle room. Premise six: "Civilization is not redeemable." How's that for religious grandeur? If Moses gave us ten commandments for living, Jensen offers 20 reasons for ending it all and directing us, with enthusiasm, back to the Stone Age, the last time he believes that humans lived sustainably on the planet.

Which brings me to last November, when, together with a full house of fans in the David Lam Auditorium at UVic, I gathered to hear Derrick speak his mind. He held forth for nearly four hours, with just a short break and never leaving the stage, delivering what he called his Endgame talk, one he had obviously given many times before to appreciative audiences. Apropos of those 20 premises, on which he based his talk, Derrick was adamant: any arguer who doesn't make clear his or her premises is not to be trusted. For him, too many arguments from those in power are allowed to stand unchallenged because those "higher on the hierarchy" slip their premises past those lower down. He wants us to uncover, confront and overturn those undisclosed premises in order to expose the inherent immorality and violence of our civilization. Period. The end of the game.

Derrick intends such naked truth-telling as a catalyst to bring down civilization, starting with cellphone towers and dams. Those twin evils are his defining symbols of modern, psychopathological industrial civilization. But the end is not happening quickly enough for Derrick (even as he concedes that industrial civilization will inevitably collapse on its own, with no outside help), who, by his own admission, is tired of trumpeting the need to bring it all down: 15 books in 10 years along with innumerable lectures telling us how terribly awful and destructive is our way of life.

His fans enjoy the sermon, for that is what it is. I haven't felt as guilty since attending Sunday school! Derrick's is a fire-and-brimstone message, a modern-day eschatological romp into nihilism for environmental activists. As for what to anticipate after the crash, he offers little guidance. Predictably, you emerge bewildered from his talk, until you've had time to collect your thoughts the next day - and realize he's taken you nowhere, abandoning you stupefied in the glare of his torment.

For Derrick's thinking dead-ends in unrewarding, disabling territory, and he runs the risk of forfeiting his poet-philosopher mantle by having nothing further to contribute to the conversation. At some level, though, he seems aware of this. Among an audience of several hundred, just three or four people, by his own accounting, are genuinely hearing his message to the point where they will act on it. But once the patient has been pronounced terminal, no helpful role remains for the philosopher-therapist beyond offering the odd nudge and grimace. Derrick even wants others to carry out the final acts of euthanasia on civilization, what he terms "below ground" work in contradistinction to his writerly "above ground" efforts.

He reserves special venom for the vacuous homilies spouted by faint-hearted activists. "You can't use the master's tools to dismantle the master's house" is one of his favourite targets, and his glee is evident as he rips into such sayings. Of course you can use the tools of your (violent, oppressive, immoral) enemies! They do work, after all; the evidence is all around us. But that's hardly the point. Copying the tactics of the other side would make you no better than they and surely produce a Mad Max world: There can be no war to end all wars, not even the war to bring down civilization. How would you even know when it was over? What would you do if it was over? Would you survive? Would the salmon?

Derrick offers but one path to salvation. Whether you do nothing, embrace civilization, or work to bring it all down makes no difference: you have blood on your hands, regardless. Better it be earned by hurrying the end of an insane culture "driven by a death urge, an urge to destroy life" (premise ten) than by hoping for a miracle. He thinks hope is useless, anyway, a surrendering of agency to those with control over you.

Am I still a fan? You bet. Derrick is a gifted writer and communicator. He pushes me to think more complexly about the catastrophic problems humanity faces. Go hear him speak if he returns to Victoria. Just make sure you go the loo beforehand.

Submitted by Brian Mason.



ask hothead

Here is the report card for Our Place Food lineups.

Right away I was amazed at how the line up works - we get to be inside, it goes around the stairs, and it moves along pretty fast. Volunteers work effortlessly to ensure approximately 1500 meals are served each day for the many hungry in our family.

Our Place gets an A just for the sheer numbers of folk they feed daily, and how many people have testified how this family has saved and affected their lives!

However, City of Victoria gets a C minus for how it is dealing with the issue of funding for Our Place. If all City Councillors took the same approach Philippe Lucas took, we may already have weekends covered and not have to worry about breakfasts ever again! Can you imagine if back room deals were not going on! Make demands of our Provincial and Federal Governments to fix, upgrade, build and repair homes, raise welfare and disability rates and stop with this madness of security culture being told it can be used to deal with the fallout of Capitalism gone MAD!

I also encourage the folks who have come to me and spoke of their passions against poverty pimping. We all need to understand that it is what we do, those of us who work the "front line field," we are "poverty pimpers" living off the avails of anti poverty "work" and "social work." An entire battalion of workers has become dependent on the continuation of homelessness in order to earn their paycheques. We desperately need for us all to come to terms with what "we" do.

It is us living in poverty and homeless who need to speak out when folks working in the field are using power in ways that are about "power over" rather than to "empower." One can be a controlling nice person with a smile and speak patronizingly to another, we know when it is happening to us. Having come to terms with the reality of poverty pimping I had to admit I was powerless somewhat in my ability to make Huge immediate change so, be the best I can be AND ensure Governments take care of all of us, ensure we advocate for all folks to be treated with dignity.

Stigma against the poor and illicit drug community's is HUGE! But the Resistance is growing faster and we are winning, our sheer numbers are getting us there. Only together can we do this folks. Surely more Victorians with privilege can give healthy, organic, greens, vegetables and fruit. Serve the community by sharing gardens, give 10% of healthy groceries you buy directly to the poor or Our Place. They can only serve what they receive. Thanks to all those folks who helped ensure a great Easter meal! Wow, it helped my immunity!

Criticism from the streets

I could not possibly answer many of the accusations about Our Place and hope that people risk more by being honest of their concerns, go in with another person and make it formal, it's best to either deal with conflict right away and get help to do so if you need it, otherwise it's gossip.

I am concerned with City Councilors who supported the bylaw a few months ago and said they wonder how many of the folks who eat at Our Place are actually homeless? A shameful attitude, especially considering that we have already educated folks on the definition of homeless, which includes "temporarily housed!" I receive a disability pension (about \$920) and I'm temporarily housed at View Towers. I pay \$633.00 on rent alone. After my out of pocket health care costs NOT covered and bills, I have enough for less than a week's worth of food. The rest of the time I am running to eat, nauseous because I'm supposed to eat organic! HAH!

I have a \$500 air filter that cannot possibly deal with the stink of tobacco, not to mention the chemical situation from shampoos to cleaners that waft into my insecure housing! Windows do not close, sliding doors threaten to get sucked out or pushed in due to tracks that are so worn down there is hardly anything holding many of View Towers' sliding doors in place. Cheap wax put on the floors just before each new tenant comes in quickly is washed off and the tiles, which you thought maybe were permanently stained, were. Hairs waxed in, are permanent, until you wash off the wax!

I took the stairs one day to see if I can make it down in case of a fire, almost fell and hit the back of my head on the stairs because of urine. I am told cleaners do stairs three times a week. It's never enough. I have photos documenting the urine, feces and blood, as well as drug and alcohol paraphernalia.

It is shameful that City Hall has not listened to businesses and citizens that have come forward asking for MORE outdoor toilets, a safe injection site, and homes. That's it, that's all we need to avoid such brutal times we are all in, power struggling and divided and conquered by a system we hold up like a god while it eats us up and spits us out with no concern for our future. Bah Humbug!

I need a pair of proper gas/smoke masks military issue because I could die of smoke inhalation before I made it out of the building with my daughter in hand! Nothing about my housing is secure. It's just the people I love really!

kym hothead is a visitor on Lekwungen Territory, from Winnipeg Red River Cree Territory where mom was an Acadian (Bourgue) and Dad was a Métis (Gladue).

Site C Dam Update

As of 5 May BC Hydro had not submitted their Description of Project to the Environmental Assessment Department, however we expect them to do so any day now. Until it's in and approved, they can't submit an application for assessment. I, for one, am surprised at how long it's taking.

Unhappily there are thunderclouds on the horizon. When asked his views on damming the Peace yet again, PM Harper replied that the economy often has to take precedence over the environment (or words to that effect). So there isn't much chance that he will protect our valley, and as we know he needs to have some electricity to put in the northern hydro transmission line he's promised to subsidize in north central BC. Also, the Albertans have nixed the proposed dam on the Slave River just north of the Athabasca Delta, which is wonderful news for the Slave River Delta, but leaves it up to us to supply power to the electricity starved oil and gas industries of northeastern BC, and north western Alberta.

At one time large, environmentally sensitive projects had to go through a provincial and a federal environmental assessment. However, I feel it in my bones that as I write the BC "LIEBERALS" and the federal Conservatives are cooking up a way to combine the two, so that the environment can be trashed more efficiently in the name of jobs. "On verra".

Luckily, we have two possible trump cards up our sleeve. It is very likely the proposed dam will be unsafe for two reasons. One is that the footings of the dam will rest on Shaftsbury shale. This is a C minus minus rock on which to build anything. If air and water get to it the rock will disintegrate. One dam in the U.S. of A. that was built on it suffered from under dam leakage and had to be decommissioned! The other is that the Peace River is in an earthquake zone. If an earthquake were to strike, the footings could start to leak, and massive mud slides from the walls of the reservoir could trigger a dambusting wave...bye bye Fort St. John and the little town of Peace River, Alberta. One wonders what the engineers at Hydro are smoking.

To build or not to build will be a political decision. Letters to federal and provincial ministers of the environment can't hurt. A small contribution to the war chest of the Peace Valley Environment Association would be much appreciated: PVEA, Box 6062, Ft St John BC, V1J 4H6. Money is POWER! While supplies last *Stop Site C* buttons are available free. Phone Don or Florence at 250-477-5507

Submitted by Don Startin

Books for Reading:

A Year in Paris and an Ordeal in Bangkok: Collected Poems and Political Essays

by Andrew Tate

Hi everyone, it's Andrew again with another book review. This month I will be reviewing a collection of poetry and political essays lent to me by Janine Bandcroft, the editor and founder of *Victoria Street Newz*. This print-on-demand book is entitled *A Year in Paris and an Ordeal in Bangkok: Collected Poems and Political Essays* (2010, Charleston, South Carolina) by D. H. Kerby, a poet and journalist who has written for the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Diego Magazine*, the *Progressive Populist*, *Consortium News*, and elsewhere. Presently he lives in Philadelphia with his wife, Carol, and her son, Mark.

This collection of poems and essays reflects Kerby's experiences in Paris, Amsterdam and Bangkok. He describes periods of homelessness and torture in Bangkok, and negative and disturbing experiences with Thailand's United States Embassy, "an odyssey of terror and deprivation through the netherworld of the American Embassy in Thailand." He criticizes the American government and the war in Iraq, and has peaceful and transformative times in Paris.

This was his period of exile, and partly self-exile, disgusted by the war in Iraq, looking for peace and security and unable to find them in an America at war under the fear-mongering, lawlessness, corruption and hypocrisy of the Bush administration.

Most of these poems were written in Paris in 2004 and 2005. His final poems were written in Athens and near the University of Pennsylvania. These insightful, thought-provoking, moving, humorous, and spiritual poems talk about periods of torture, utter destitution and homelessness in Thailand moving on to his happy, peaceful, insightful and transformative times in Paris. Three few poems that I particularly liked were *For Terri Schiavo*, the severely brain-damaged, vegetative young American woman whose life-support equipment was eventually turned off; *At the Cafe Next Door During the Spin Cycle* and the *Poetic Addendum to At the Cafe Next Door during the Spin Cycle*, *Written after a Bad Priest Has caused me to Question Why I ever became a Christian in the First Place*, both humorous and spiritual poems dealing with the nature and origin of God, the power of prayer, His forgiveness of sin, and, in the Poetic Addendum, the poet questioning why he ever became a Christian in the first place; *Tuesday, January 20, 2009 University City* Kerby, back in Philadelphia with his wife and son, is enjoying tranquility and bliss and is overjoyed that G.W. is "relegated to the dustbin of history" and that Obama, the new president is "...a leader who would never do what W. has done:/Sell us a war with lies, trading, as he did, on Americans'/Inability (or refusal) to distinguish between the nation/Of Iraq and the ones who attacked New York and Washington." He also praises Hillary Clinton, the new Secretary of State, as a new voice for peace and justice. Once describing America as a "formerly democratic Republic because of the theft of the Presidential election of 2000 and the possible theft of the election of 2004," Kerby feels that since the election of Barack Obama in 2008, "our Republic has begun to restore the rule of law after a period of profound governmental lawlessness. No one could be happier than I."

This is a fascinating, insightful, disturbing, passionate, adventurous, spiritual, humorous and thought-provoking collection of poems and essays about one man's incredible journey through Europe and Asia while experiencing the ordeals of poverty, torture, destitution and despair in Thailand; and then, later on in Paris, embracing self-discovery, rebirth, peace, joy, and, at the end, a sense of hope and optimism for a new, peaceful, compassionate, and lawful America upon returning home after several years of self-exile. The book is for sale on Amazon, Barne's and Noble's, and Powell's books, but it's not available in any of the branches of the GVPL yet.

Until next time, *Andrew Tate*

Andrew earned a B.A. in English, and is available to proofread, edit, and/or type and print out your essays. Email him at mrpianoman@shaw.ca (I'm a musician as well) for more information.



Healthcare Dollars and Sense

by cyann ray

I haven't managed to write anything in months. This is odd for me. For over 40 years words have leapt from my mind to the page with enthusiasm and little effort. Now I can't even hold a pen. A pinched nerve in my neck paralyzed my right arm from shoulder-blade to fingertips and the pain was outstanding. I was immediately dependent upon our healthcare system for pain meds. And while part of me (the biggest part!) was grateful for the sweet relief those pills provided, my concerns about the pharmaceutical industry remained. (See "Ills and Pills," Vic SNZ July '10). As the weeks went by I began realizing some disturbing realities about our healthcare system. And now that I am well enough to type (I still cannot comfortably use a pen), I wish to share this discovery.

Our government prefers the pharmaceutical approach to healthcare. They support and subsidize the manufacturing and distribution of drugs. Walk-in clinics are everywhere and I got my pain meds quickly with few questions and no money. That's right...free drugs. What's not to like about that? I've never had to pay for a prescription. I'm sure richer folks pay (which is how it should be in a fair, socialist world...you know, "From each according to ability, to each according to need." And I know that many of the pills on the menu are not covered. But generally, pills are easily accessed by all. Most doctors prefer this pharmaceutical approach as well. Time is money afterall and it takes two seconds to write out a prescription.

I'm certainly glad I didn't have to pay for my pain meds and even more delighted they were easy to get, but I know these pills are not "fixing" me. They are merely allowing me to cope with my physical discomfort. I know I won't get "better" simply by taking these pills. I also know the dangers of long-term use. Actual treatment for many conditions, including mine, is found beyond the prescription pad. There are a range of treatments out there from physiotherapy, to acupuncture, chiropractor or massage. Unfortunately our government has yet to grasp the value of such care and most doctors fail to promote these types of treatments.

Yes, I know about the 10 subsidized "alternative treatments" available to me. Guess that shows some progression in our healthcare system. But my 2 massages and 8 visits to the chiropractor still cost me nearly \$300. With our government giving unwell folks on disability (PWD) about \$900/mth., I'd hardly call this helpful or progressive.

This whole experience has contributed to my concern over our pharmaceutically dependent healthcare system. And I was shocked when one doctor pooh-poohed my chiropractor's diagnosis, acting as if I had said "my witch-doctor believes it's a pinched nerve at C-6. He readily gave me more pills but his suggestion for "treatment" was to go to the hospital emergency and wait around for a cat-scan.

I am slowly improving thanks to the generosity of friends and family, a supportive chiropractor, some free acupuncture (from Ted at Our Place and the pay-by-donation sessions at Pacific Rim College in Market Square), and, I'm assuming, time. (I've heard that time heals all wounds!). But complete recovery is a ways off yet and will cost me.

editor's note: When the BC NDP governed the province, low income individuals were entitled to 12 subsidized massage, 12 chiropractor, and 12 physiotherapy visits a year. Shortly after the BC Liberals took power in 2000, the complimentary medicine subsidy was reduced to 10 total visits per year. They also eliminated subsidies for an annual eye exam previously available to low income people. They recently added acupuncture to the list of approved treatments, but the total of 10 visits overall remains.

The Affordability Index - more than just the Living Wage

By any measure, BC has one of the highest poverty rates in the country.¹ With a very high cost of living (particularly housing costs), far too many British Columbians find it impossible to make ends meet.

The Affordability Index reflects the real costs of living through the hourly wage required to enjoy an adequate quality of life in our region.

"The living wage calculation used to generate the Affordability Index gives us a concrete measure of how much families need to earn just to get by in the Capital Region," says Brian Hill, Board President of the Community Social Planning Council. "The calculation also sheds light on the real costs of living here and invites us all, including citizens, employers and policy makers, to work together for practical solutions that reduce costs and increasing incomes. The increase in the costs of living identified by comparing the current index with past years needs to be a call to action for us all."

In 2011, the wage required to maintain an adequate quality of life in BC's Capital Region is calculated at \$18.03 per hour, a 4.2% increase from 2010. This calculation assumes two adults working 35 per week each while providing a home for two children.

Details of the affordability crunch facing residents were discussed at an event "Doing it Better Together" being held at the Burnside Gorge Community Centre on April 28th.

For more information please contact:

Rupert Downing, Executive Director
250-383-6166 ext 107
Rupert@communitycouncil.ca

Sources and References:

¹ outbind://16/#_ftn1
www.communitycouncil.ca
livingwageforfamilies.ca

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Cleansing the Body on a Budget

from Hillary Krupa

We are exposed to more toxins on a daily basis than ever before. Pollutants in the air we breathe, negative thoughts and stress, preservatives, pesticides and herbicides in our foods, and even most body care products all place a toxic burden on the body.

In small amounts, our bodies are able to deal with these offenders, but when the burden becomes too much to bear, disease sets in.

Therefore the importance of removing toxins from our bodies cannot be overstated, and doing so doesn't need to be costly or complicated. Here are some simple and inexpensive ways to cleanse our bodies on a budget.

Foods/Dietary choices

Lemon - An amazing liver tonic. Drinking the juice of one half lemon in a glass of water 20 minutes before meals can help stimulate digestion and aid fat metabolism.

Apple cider vinegar- True apple cider vinegar supports digestion and promotes the growth of the healthy bacteria in our bodies. It's available at most health food stores for around five dollars. Make sure it states "with mother" on the bottle, ensuring the live enzymes and healthy bacterial culture are present, giving it the beneficial properties.

Aloe Vera juice- Soothes the digestive tract and has mild laxative qualities. Helps promote regularity, which in turn helps remove toxins. You can find Aloe Vera juice or gel for internal use at most health food stores for under ten dollars. Try mixing two tablespoons with warm lemon water first thing in the morning.

Parsley- Has a diuretic effect, benefits the kidneys and purifies the urinary tract.

Cilantro- Helps remove heavy metals from the body.

Spices- Turmeric, ginger and cayenne are excellent additions to the diet, used to enhance digestion, circulation and overall cleansing.

Fiber- Helps bind and remove toxins from the body via the colon. Increase fiber by eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, choosing whole grains and adding beans or lentils as sources of vegetarian protein. Adding a couple tablespoons of ground flax seed to the diet is also an inexpensive way to increase fiber and healthy omega 3 fatty acids. Grinding your own flaxseeds in a coffee grinder is ideal for keeping the oils fresh, otherwise make sure to purchase ground flax seed that is kept in the fridge.

Water- One of the most important substances in our body is often overlooked. Water helps flush waste from our cells and remove it from the body via the kidneys and bladder. It is recommended to drink a minimum of eight glasses of water a day.

As important as the removal of toxins from our body is the prevention of having them re-enter. Cutting back on or eliminating sugar, artificial sweeteners, dairy, caffeine and alcohol will greatly increase body's ability to detoxify. The goal, when cleansing, is to eat foods as close to their natural state as possible. The more processed a food is, the less nutrients it gives you. Choose brown rice instead of white for example, orange juice instead of soda, and green or herbal tea rather than coffee. Avoid fast foods, canned, packaged or microwaveable meals and anything that has a long shelf life. Real food is fresh.

Herbs

Gigi Vincentine, a Registered Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner at Self Heal Herbs, recommends a blend of milk thistle, dandelion and nettle.

Combine one teaspoon of each with 4 cups of water, bring to a boil and let simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. The brew can then be consumed throughout the day.

For less than 15 dollars you can purchase enough of these herbs in bulk to last a week.

It's important to note that when buying milk thistle in bulk, you must first crack open the seeds with a mortar and pestle or coffee grinder before brewing to release the medicinal properties.

Additional herbs to consider are burdock root, red clover and Oregon Grape Root.

In Victoria, you can purchase bulk herbs at Simple Remedies, Self-Heal Herbs and Lifestyle Markets Douglas St. location. Most health food stores also carry capsule and tincture forms.

Lifestyle choices

Reducing stress can have a dramatic affect on our toxicity levels. Positive thinking, deep breathing and even smiling can help increase our body's ability to deal with toxins by boosting our immune system, mood and desire to take care of our selves. Physical activity is also a wonderful way to help detoxify by increasing circulation and removal of toxins via sweat.

By adopting any number of the above choices into our lives, we automatically increase our vitality and decrease our toxic load. Whether you decide to use certain herbs for a few weeks or make some long-term diet and lifestyle changes, cleansing the body and taking care of our selves doesn't have to be expensive, but the rewards will be rich.

Hillary Krupa is a Registered Holistic Nutritionist and writer living in Victoria, BC. For more information on her work and consultations please contact hillarykrupa@gmail.com.



Street Profile --

Steve

-- From Cop to Cocaine A Survival Story

by Ernie Tadla

Where it all began

Steve was born March 3, 1954 in Whitehorse, Yukon.

He was the eldest of four and his father was in the Army. He re-listed into the Air Force, was posted to France where Steve spent his first 4 years. Living an unsettled military life-style in France had a profound influence on him.

His father was a rounder, given to heavy drinking and womanizing, along with drunken and sober fits of anger. Steve did not enjoy a loving, stable home. There was a total lack of communication at home.

Even in rare fatherly gestures when he and his Dad traveled to town, his father never spoke to Steve in a kind manner. He was constantly verbally abused with cursing and brutal self-esteem destroying comments and accusations. He had no interest in anything Steve was doing or feeling, no communication, a very distant father/son relationship.

This same pattern repeats and repeats itself in all the male profiles I am writing. All we, you, me, every little boy needs, wants, and thrives on a strong father figure who will love us, listen to us, play with us, encourage us, inspire us. If we don't receive this in our early years we go out into life with a black hole, a void in our soul that follows and affects us throughout our life. All these homeless men started early in life with the homeless seed planted in their young hearts.

Steve was a good student, completed Grade 12 and moved on to 1 and ½ years of University, studying Sociology and Criminal Justice at SFU.

In July, 1972 he became a policeman and received his first posting to Surrey, where he spent 1½ years in uniform and then 4 years in plainclothes. He married and they had a daughter.

At 26 years of age, his wife took their daughter and returned to her home in Alberta. He had become cynical about his policing environment and with his liberal views felt it was time for a change.

He obtained an Alberta Provincial Government investigative position with the Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. He was then moved into the Gaming Regulation Division. Legalized gaming was a new and growing segment of our Western Canadian society. At the young age of 35 Steve had become a national expert in this type of work. He was courted and then lured by the BC provincial government to move to BC in 1988.

By 1992, he was Director of his division, with a staff of 50 and 4 regional offices under his management. He was well compensated in a politically sensitive position. He remarried and he and his second wife had two children.

Pandora's box opens

It was here in his heydays that his curiosity enticed him to try cocaine, which opened up a Pandora's box and was the beginning of the end of a very successful career, family, and life, as he knew it.

His marriage with two children ended in divorce in 1994 and his coke use accelerated.

In 1995 he entered into another relationship. He introduced her to cocaine and then the both of them, now codependents, enabled each other and together they descended down the slide into oblivion.

Although in the grasp of an accelerating cocaine addiction, Steve was managing his job without detection from his superiors. He knew he was at risk and entered into 3 separate treatment centers and plans - in 2001, a 30 day treatment program in Maple Ridge, later a one month day program, then a 3-month program in Campbell River.

As a result of issues, which arose during his heaviest days of active addiction and street experiences, he experienced post stress syndrome-like reactions of nightmares, sweating and anxiety attacks.

In late 2001 Steve realized his problem and his job responsibilities were not compatible. It became a matter of conscience to him. So he resigned from his government position and was granted a substantial cash payment in recognition of his outstanding job accomplishments and performance.



Then the party with all his hangers-on began.

Within 5 months, the money and his buddies were gone. He woke up one morning, 47 years of age with a raging \$1,000 a day habit, his high level income gone, his nest egg gone and his friends moved on. His self-esteem and credibility vanished. He could have chosen a life of crime dealing drugs. He knew enough about it. Finally, Steve made a wise decision and did not pursue that as a source of income.

Homelessness sets in!

He couch-surfed, stayed at the Sally Ann, and then moved over to StreetLink. He made a decision to clean up, to retake control of his life, his mind and his body. He looked inward and began a slow tortuous inner journey.

He has gone through 3 relapses, (2 one day ones and one for a month) which only fueled his determination to stay clean permanently. He is focused on the three children he has fathered and his grandchildren. He wants to reconnect, regain his grandfather role with them. He will probably find it easier to reconnect with his grandchildren than with his children. They remember the pain, disappointment, and abandonment.

Now

Steve's thirst for spiritual meaning has taken him to the Greater Victoria Public Library where he delves into the study of addiction, biographies of people who have overcome addictions, biographies of people with inspirational lives like Victor Frankl and his book, [Search for Meaning](#). He daily tussles with keeping his mind clear and not getting dragged down by watching mindless TV or associating with druggies from the past.

He has taken up writing and is considering doing some volunteer work hoping his own experience can help other cross the bridge or avoid ending up over there, on the other side.

The place of Victoria Street Newz

Steve got involved with *Victoria Street Newz* in late 2010, and they have been very supportive. *Street Newz* has provided Steve with access and involvement in the world of independent media and a chance to augment his modest disability income and also to gain experience in writing.

Steve's Words

"In looking back I see how arrogant I was in thinking that I could dabble with cocaine and not be affected by it. I thought I was too smart to become addicted.

I was 39 when I started doing cocaine and began spiraling down.

Although my life has been drastically affected what sustains me is the spiritual journey that I am on and the hope that it gives. Because of this hope I have no intention of giving up. My soul (true self) is too precious."

How Steve's story affected me

Each profile story is so different, so unique and yet there are a couple of common threads running through the majority of them.

Steve got past his younger years without succumbing to the temptations of drugs or alcohol. It was only after a successful police career and a highly successful governmental management stint at a high-level layer in two provincial government departments that his restlessness, his curiosity got the best of him. His lost years did not begin until his late 30s.

The common threads:

- lack of love, stability in the early formative years
- the reverse mid-life crisis approaching old age.
- With the homed male, upon reaching his mid-40s, early 50s starts the downhill trek to aging, suddenly panics about his mortality and reaches past his loyal loving wife and mother of his children. New clothing, cavorting with younger nubile sweeties (out to and ready to enjoy the ride of dating someone with money that their younger male friends do not have) to grasp at his receding youth, which might also include buying or leasing a bright red convertible.
- The reverse is true with some homeless males. The specter of encroaching age brings thoughts of purpose, meaning, and legacy as expressed by the number of children fathered along their wanton paths of living life today like there is no tomorrow. But then, tomorrow comes.
- A search for spirituality or a Higher Power begins to bring some sense and order to the meaning or purpose of his life.

Steve displayed a strong independent course, not following the crowd, not joining the herd, but forging two successful career paths on the right side of the law.

Neglected by his father fostered an unsettled disquiet that two marriages, two successful careers, recognition and respect from the outside, above average income could not fill the void in his heart and soul. Maybe cocaine could. Maybe it did until he lost it all.

I am struck how serious Steve is in his search for meaning. He is using his intellect to study history, biography, trying to figure this game out. He is using his investigative skills to uncover where he fits in.

That at 57, he is still active in his search to fill his void, impresses me.

Please stick with it, Steve. You will find what you are searching for. Others have found it and so can you. It is within you!

The purpose of this series of 7 profiles

To provide inspiration and hope to homeless people by presenting folks like them who were "able to cross over the bridge," and provide stories of success to the general public who maybe are frustrated and tired with the homeless situation of Victoria.

These stories have changed my paradigm and my worldview. If interested, ask me, and I will share my own personal inner experience.

If you or someone you know would be willing to add their story to this cause, please contact me, Ernie Tadla, at ernie@tadla.ca.



Dear Couz ♦♦♦♦♦

Puerta Vallarta's Garbage Dump

by Jennifer Hastie

Hi Couz!

We're back from Mexico with news to report: the highlight of our trip was a tour of the Puerto Vallarta garbage dump to witness the ongoing re-cycling occurring and the efforts to improve the awful working and living conditions there.

While we were staying in a resort called "Paradise Village," we learned that it was possible for us to take a tour of the Puerto Vallarta garbage dump. The tour brochure emphasized that this would be an uplifting, positive experience for us. It was free, supported by the resort who supplies the Van and the gas to drive us there and back.

Why would a resort sponsor such a program? Well, Couz, the owner of this resort was once an immigrant to Canada, actually, to North Vancouver. He made a fortune, apparently, and decided that he would show his appreciation for his success in the First World by helping to make the Third World a better place. Through his support of a small Canadian non-profit organization, he has enabled millions of dollars to be raised and directly applied to the garbage dump issue.

There were 8 other people on the tour that morning along with the two of us. John, a volunteer working for the Canadian non-profit group, helps to run free tours out to the dump 5 days a week from the resort. The Van was driven by Randy, another Canadian volunteer. John and his wife appear to run the Canadian non-profit society mostly via e-mails and a website, allowing a great deal of money to be filtered directly to the "pickers" at the dump without the intervention of a large office and paid staff.

Along with the others in the Van and 2 or 3 regular volunteers that morning, we did a little work for the families who live here. My husband became a "bean counter," measuring out beans to package and place in the store that is operated and run by local garbage dump personnel. I volunteered for the preschool program. My work entailed rocking young babies and looking after preschoolers who are dropped off by their moms at the Center. This program allows the mothers to shop, work in the dump or in the small service areas that the volunteer group and the garbage dump people have developed. The Moms can bring a spare set of clothes for the children and those clothes will be washed and returned by the end of the day. I was lucky to escape holding the baby who poo'd over one of the other volunteers!

Another volunteer from Canada eagerly showed us the computer program for young people and the two small classrooms that they are running for the children. They also have small groups for parents in

computer skills and English in the evenings. Also, in the evenings, the young people can play on soccer teams, coached mainly by the fathers of the households of this impoverished community.

How the store is run is interesting. Everything costs 10 pesos (about \$1.00). Depending on how valuable the item is, they can purchase 1, 2, or 3 of the item for the price of 10 pesos. "It helps us sort out who is really hungry and who isn't," says a Canadian volunteer. For example, anyone whose family is really hungry will pick a bag full of beans, rather than a sugary breakfast cereal for their family.

We were asked not to take any pictures. The organization wants to prevent pictures of the dump from showing up on the internet. They also want us to respect the individuals whose lives we are peering at from our protected role as people from the First World. The dump merely looks like a bald hillside from our vantage point.

One member of the group asked about the water on the road. "You don't want to ask," says John, "just don't drink it." He mentioned that a delivery truck comes a couple of times a week to fill barrels with drinkable water.

As we drove slowly along the dirt road next to the dump, John continued to tell us about the problems and successes that their organization has had. Occasionally a religious word would pop in to his vocabulary, but promoting the Christian religion is very far from his goal.

Small businesses, for example, a store and a restaurant under a tarp, have been started. Others run stores from makeshift shelters where they live. John explains how a recent lengthy power outage (weather related) in the surrounding community was a great boon for the population here. The outage allowed them to hook their shelters up to electricity, without running the risk of being electrocuted in the process.

In contrast to Mexico City, the Puerto Vallarta city government is understanding of the people who live in the dump. Such an electrical "procedure" is not contested by them. Also, when the volunteer organization is able to build low-cost housing, the city government has said that it will supply electricity, water, and sewage to the housing development. On the other hand, our understanding of the Mexico City dump situation is that the low-cost housing development there has to wait 3 years before the government will supply any services to the people who have been relocated. I remember a tour guide mentioning this fact as we drove to an historical site outside Mexico City on a day tour back in 2005. The guide was rather critical and unconcerned about homeless people who are struggling to survive in their massive garbage dump. Yet, that group has managed to develop a school classroom and a soccer field built right within the dump. As of 2005, the "pickers" were still living in amongst the garbage. In Puerto Vallarta, thanks to the owner of Paradise Village, the Canadian organization has managed to relocate the pickers to the edge of the dump within only 5 years.

The resilience of the human being in the face of such extreme poverty is incredibly uplifting!

The Puerto Vallarta dump recycling project consists chiefly of plastics and metals from the First World tourists, along with some First World garbage that wafts in from the ocean. The dumpsters ship the sorted items to places like Japan for re-manufacturing. Alas, the garbage pickers will experience a sharp decline in sales of their raw material since Japan's



earthquake disaster. It has affected their manufacturers' ability to access power for their plants. In addition, the present tourist season in Mexico is now coming to a close because the weather is simply getting too hot for North Americans to come south any more this year.

"What about social problems," we ask. "Drugs and violence are present in this group, too," replies John. He says that the only thing that "works" in the end is the volunteers' role modelling. Also, Mexico is still a macho society and when that kind of culture goes off the rails, the women and the children suffer.

There is also prejudice toward the garbage dump people from the surrounding community. One situation that provided a new understanding occurred when the community noticed that some male adults from the garbage dump group were observed to be good soccer players. It was arranged through the garbage dump soccer coach that these players would play on the local soccer team. From there, attitudes began to change on both sides.

You know, Couz, I learned a great deal on this trip about the survival of human beings in the face of extremely bad conditions. However, I also learned that:

- * Even if you're rich, you can still have a heart of gold and care for those less fortunate than yourself, your network of friends, or your family.
- * I learned that a handful of people from Canada, formed to make a non-profit society, have done wonders in 5 years at the Puerto Vallarta garbage dump for a large group of disadvantaged people. More information on this group, a registered non-profit society in Canada, can be accessed by computer at www.familiesatthedump.org. They will appreciate any amount of money, should you wish to donate to them.
- * I learned that it is possible to stay in a fancy, First World resort and still volunteer time to help others so much worse off than yourself.
- * I learned that Walmart and Sam's Club do a lot of donating behind the scenes in Mexico.
- * I learned that re-cycling must become a global issue, where cooperation and economic supports are put in place among all countries before we poison everyone on earth and deplete our natural resources.
- * I learned that resistance is sometimes a sign of hope within the impoverished; for some who are resistant have simply not let life knock the stuffing out of them.
- * I learned that human beings, even in the face of extremely poor living conditions, can survive and strive to improve their lot in life, especially if they are given a small hand up, rather than a hand out.
- * I learned that the proper term for the "Mexican language" is really the "Castillian language." The Spaniards invaded Mexico and plundered the people of Mexico and countries all up and down the North and South American coast for 400 years. The Spanish even came as far as north as Yuquot, known as "Friendly Cove," on our West Coast. These Spaniards came from the province of Castille. They were brutal, cruel and destructive, robbing New World peoples of their gold, their health, their lives, their self respect, their system of government and their trust of strangers.
- * I re-learned that there's a common spiritual bond among all indigenous peoples, perhaps all over the world. It seems to me, Couz, that the non-native conquerors from the First World, driven by power and economic opportunity, are really the odd men out, not the conquered peoples who continue to suffer the effects of Colonialism today.

Jennifer and her husband live in Victoria today. She is a healthy, active senior who enjoys writing volunteer articles for various publications.

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Stigma

Astigmatism's when you have just one misshapen eyeball; but heredity's the culprit -- not your fault -- and you can get corrective lenses to offset whatever visual impairment comes along

Stigmata on the other hand (or both, and feet as well) can send you off in holy bloody ecstasy to haul your nuisance cross about the town to get whatever adoration's up for grabs.

But stigma, all alone, sits dumb before the social gaze, a vision problem too, but viewed through lenses, habit-tinted to remove compassion from the heart's response and leave the seen and seer both impoverished in the end.

In the gap between buildings,
grey as a low tide beach
of wave-ground grit,
owning no space
but the cage of carted
possessions,
are the others
Where silence punctuates
the layers of lunchtime chatter,
mounting staccato defence
to wave away
the beggar's plea,
the curse, the cough the shuffling off,
In the pause at the height
of the hammer swing,
blunt crushing force incipient,
in the no-time between
jackhammer beats,
there stands the other.

Gone before reflection
apprehends or hears,
nose-wrinkling, dismissed
by tourists, locals, shoppers
to a social oblivion, -- invisible --
though cloaked in tatters
of our lost humanity.

Derek Peach



The Victoria Human Exchange Society invites YOU to their
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Remembering Debbie Norton

Although I have always appreciated and realized how fortunate I am to be healthy and self-sufficient, knowing Debbie made me appreciate my circumstances even more.

It was good to see her and chat a bit outside of London Drugs. I always looked for her straw hat and its flowers - and her smile.

We had a few good laughs. She will be missed. She was a strong woman.

Perhaps this poem will help her friends.

Sincerely, Welda Allen

*Do not stand at my grave & weep;
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow;
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain;
I am the gentle autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft star that shines at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there; I did not die.*

author unknown



Mean Streets

Tough women
Mean streets
Cold wind blowin'
Poor man's beat
Beat on the corner with his thirty six cents
Beggin' like a nicotine dog
Beat in the traffic and the harsh sunny day
Beat in a bleary-eyed fog
All boozed out and beat
Beat on a bowl of soup
Bet with the rest of the troop
Beat by the doors of the old Sally Ann
Where filthy drifters stagger and stoop
And smoke and spit and sleep in the coop
In from the streets for a moment of warmth
And a sermon for living a lie called The Truth
Captain Compassion grips the ladle
And seats them down with token trust
Reverend Fossil comes round their tables
And quotes from the Book of Dust
And beats them down for laziness
Ad loneliness and lust
Angry horns bark outside
And sirens cry in the distance
And the sun goes down
And Johnny Carson dies
And eras pass into history
On the mean streets
And the cold wind blows
And the tough women curse
And push their babies across the bridge
While bickering crows squawk in the gutter
And fluttering papers flip and fly
Away up high in the cruel blue sky
And water streaks from the sides of my eyes
A door opens before me
Silent people wait in chairs
A receptionist directs me to another receptionist
I walk down a corridor of recycled air
And I wish I could go home

Stanley

Reflecting on Kay Dixon and Theocracy

I had heard of Technocracy before coming to Victoria and meeting Kay Dixon. I'd heard about how we could have a scientific government if it was run by scientists, engineers, and the people with technology. Technocracy doesn't believe in democracy or elections. It is a totalitarian political theory in which the government is run by scientific "experts." So if we had doctors and nurses running the government, would it be a healthier government?

The May issue of the *Street Newz* shows a photo of Kay and her famous Technocracy Incorporated sign with its red and white symbol which urged people to "investigate technocracy." This raised questions for me and maybe others. Did she investigate it herself with enough critical thinking to come up with the answers I'm needing?

"Technocracy was big in the 1930s!" Kay told me nostalgically. "Yes it was" I sheepishly responded. Then I tried to explain to her that in the 1940s the Nazis employed scientists, engineers, and doctors to build weapons, gas chambers, and concentration camps that killed people and damaged the environment. In the 1980s President Reagan called upon scientists to give us "Star Wars" technology but I'm afraid that I'd lost Kay's attention in my explanation ...

Our understanding of ethics and attitudes about life need to keep pace with advances in technology. Technocracy, which was once popular, is no longer a viable political theory because it has lost its relevance for reasons already stated.

Kay Dixon passed away quietly on March 26th 2011 here in Victoria. Her celebration of life was held in the chapel of Our Place Society on April 15th 2011. It was officiated by Reverend Allen Tysick who unexpectedly announced he was retiring that day instead of July 15th.

An employee of Our Place drop in centre quietly explained to me that Reverend Al had some paid holiday time which he was forced to take for "political" reasons. Further explanations were not forthcoming ... is this the end of theocracy as well?

Yours respectfully,

Robin Kingsley



The Street Newz Vendor Team

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James Bay Thrifty's



Steve
Blanshard



Valerie
Fort & Foul Bay

WHERE YOUR \$\$\$\$\$ GOES



Vendors pay 50 cents for each *Street Newz*.

Whatever you give them is theirs to keep.

May money from the sale of this newspaper be used for peace, and pass through healing hands.

You can help Street Newz go International !

For the first time since *Street Newz* was born in 2004, we're attending the International Street Newspaper Conference.

Rose Henry has been a poverty rights activist for many years. She'll be representing us in Glasgow this July.

So far we've raised \$1000 of \$2500 can you help? Any amount is very much appreciated.

Donate securely online at RelativeNewz.ca, or send a cheque to 1027 Pandora Avenue, Victoria BC, V8V 3P6

Thanks so very much for your support !!!

	Mar	Apr	May
Street Newz Revenue			
Paper Sales (from previous mth)	345.50	332.50	370.50
Donations	175.00	110.00	10.00
Gifts (incl in-kind)	40.00	250.00	40.00
Co-ordinator's Contribution	-337.31	190.42	13.39
Subscriptions	175.00	70.00	300.00
Hope in Shadows Calendars	495.00	0.00	0.00
Direct Donations to Coordinator	50.00	50.00	50.00
Bread & Roses Donation to SNZ	800.00	800.00	800.00
Total Street Newz Revenue	1743.19	1808.92	1583.89
Street Newz Expenses			
Salaries	800.00	800.00	800.00
Paper & Printing Costs	483.84	483.84	356.40
Repaid Vendor Debt	0.00	40.00	0.00
Office expenses/website	0.00	0.00	16.00
Postage	69.35	55.08	57.40
Ttl Street Newz Expenses	1353.19	1378.92	1233.80
Street Newz	390.00	430.00	350.00
Bread & Roses Revenue			
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Bread & Roses Revenue	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bread & Roses Expenses			
Street Newz Donation	800.00	800.00	800.00
Ttl Bread & Roses Expenses	800.00	800.00	800.00
Bread & Roses	-800.00	-800.00	-800.00
Consolidated Ttl (SNZ + B&R)	-410.00	-370.00	-450.00
Intl Conference July 2011	170.00	000.00	1000.00
Bread & Roses Bank Balance	3963.22	3943.22	3118.55

Don't Miss an Issue!

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for your clients/customers/office:

5 copies/mth for \$175/yr; 10 copies/mth for \$300/yr

Just a Donation

\$10	\$25	\$50	\$75	\$100	\$200	other
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Please return to Victoria Street Newz
1027 Pandora Ave, Vic BC, V8V 3P6 Thanks!